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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MUST CONGRESS GO?

SIR,—Will you please answer an earnest inquiry? It is, Why not abolish Congress? This may seem startling, but, honestly, has not Congress outlived its usefulness and become one of those unnecessary expenses everyone is being urged to cut off in war-times?

Is it possible to point to a single performance of the national legislature since March 1, 1913, at all commensurate with the expense, delays and annoyances of this obsolete and unwieldy body? Over and over again we read that the President has proposed to Congress certain legislation to which the leaders thereof seriously object, with the conclusion of the prescient reporter that, "Despite all objections, the Congress undoubtedly will do precisely as the President directs." And in every instance developments prove the accuracy of the prediction. Why, then, put the President to the trouble of going to Congress with his recommendations; the labor of impressing on the members that it is their duty to obey, not to think; and the delay of waiting—as he occasionally does—for Congress to act before putting his recommendations into effect?

It is true that Congress used to constitute a certain check on public expenditures, but not so now. It makes a great fuss and pother about passing "the big supply bills", and in the end does just what the President tells it to and—buys and distributes garden-seed. With the latest legislation ordered by the President, solemn enactments creating specific offices and apportioning the funds between the several agencies of the Government may be swept aside with a stroke of the Presidential pen, and a redistribution made at the discretion of the Executive.

We used to believe that Congress alone had power to make war, and the President did direct the passage of war resolutions in the cases of Germany and Austria-Hungary; but not so in the cases of Mexico and Hayti, where the bodies of over six hundred Haytians and several hundred Mexicans bear mute testimony to the fact that war was made; while the bodies of the American dead in Arlington prove that it was made by the United States.

Much time on the part of Senators, and brain-power on the part of the official reporters and newspapermen, have just been expended in an investigation by the Senate Committee on Military Affairs. As a result, the members of the committee solemnly decided, in all seriousness, that the country needed a "War Cabinet" and a "Director of Munitions"—greatly to the annoyance of the President, who was thus compelled to start a Democratic Ananias Club with the Chairman of the committee as its charter member.

Time was when the Senate was supposed to possess an important function in advising the President regarding agreements with foreign nations and consenting to important appointments. But no one ever consented to Colonel House, or Dr. Hale, or even John Lind, and have they not all functioned just as beautifully as if the Senate, at the dictation of the President, had confirmed them? Was it necessary for the Senate to consent to the agreements with Villa, or with Carranza, or with Hayti? Why, the President has not even considered it wise to inform the Senate of the agreements entered into on behalf of the United States by his special ambassador at the Paris Conference; or about the pledges which he himself made on the part of this Nation to France and England through Balfour and Viviani; or of his formal recognition of Japan's special interest in China. Can anyone deny that as an advising and consenting body the Senate has passed the age of consent?

Why then should not Congress pass a single act—under cloture with debate limited to an hour in each house—abolishing itself for the period of the war and for eighteen months thereafter; delegating to the President authority to issue bonds, levy taxes and make disbursements, and to do whatever is, in his judgment, for the best interest of the country; empowering him to fill all offices he may see fit to create, at such compensation as he may deem wise, with his son-in-law? Would it not be infinitely simpler for the business men of the country to have to deal only with Messrs. Wilson and McAdoo, instead of with numerous and divers councils and commissions on national defense, imports, lingerie, exports, morals, publicity, fuel, shipping, food, and so on, ad lib.? Would it not be far more economical to permit these two statesmen to take such compensation as they see fit and dispense with several hundred members of Congress, drawing salaries aggregating \$4,000,000, to say nothing of mileage, for doing nothing?

Then all these M. Cs., with their invertebrate protestations, their long winded quibbling, their sycophantic twaddle, could go home and swell the ranks of farm labor, where, God knows, they are needed.

These are war times, times when everyone is being adjured to cut red-tape, abandon precedent and practise thrift. They are days when innovations, total abstinence, woman suffrage, popular election of unpopular Senators, and personal purity are being accomplished by Constitutional amendment. Why then, in God's name, should we not boldly strike at our greatest extravagance and abolish Congress—by Constitutional amendment if need be—but abolish it anyway?

WASHINGTON, D. C.

AN ANXIOUS INQUIRER.

CUSSING WILL HELP

SIR,—You have so often clothed in lucid and scintillating editorials my views on public questions, that I must confess my expectation to find in an early forthcoming issue of the REVIEW an article entitled "This is the age of little men," a subject explored several years ago by Marse Henry Watterson, when Kentucky sent a certain small man to the Senate.

The President sent a Commission to Paris to engage in an Allied conference on the war. At the head of this Commission was Colonel House, unknown to fame in America, except as a gubernatorial Warwick in Texas, until Mr. Wilson became President. Passing by Mr. Wilson's choice of